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ABSTRACT

Part of a series of various Model Programs which informs educators about successful ongoing programs, the booklet describes the Project Early Push in Buffalo, New York, a preschool program for disadvantaged 4-year-olds which has been operating since 1966. The program provides experiences which are basic to later reading success and which are usually missing in traditional preschool environments. Specific objectives include: nurturing a healthy self-concept; improving perceptual, discriminatory, labeling, and concept-building abilities; enlarging understanding of the environment; encouraging self-expression; developing body coordination; and encouraging interaction with others. Distinguishing characteristics of Project Early Push include small classes arranged into several interest centers, a relatively unstructured curriculum, extensive field trips, intensive parental participation, and regularly scheduled inservice training. By the 1970-71 academic year the program had expanded to include 22 schools. Evaluation data have shown consistent gains in IQ for the project children. (LH)

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Model Programs

Compensatory Education

Project Early Push
Buffalo, New York

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Model Programs

DHEW Publication No. (OE) 72-89

Compensatory Education

Project Early Push
Buffalo, New York

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
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FOREWORD

This is the third in NCEC's *Model Programs* series, whose purpose is to inform educators about successful ongoing programs and to provide them with sufficient information to decide if locally modified replications would be desirable. Included in this series are descriptions of 15 "successful" compensatory education programs for disadvantaged children currently operating in the Nation's schools.

Under contract to the Office of Education, the American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto, Calif., identified—through a literature search and nominations by local, State, and national educational agencies—over 400 candidate programs in this area. Of this number only 17 met the stringent criteria for success established by AIR in conjunction with OE. It should be noted that most of the programs rejected during the study were not rejected because they were demonstrated failures but rather because their evaluation methodology was so inadequate that a conclusion about success or failure could not be drawn.

Short descriptions of each program in the series have been prepared, covering such topics as context and objectives, personnel, methodology, inservice training, parent involvement, materials and equipment, facilities, schedule, evaluation data, budget, and sources for further information.

Six of the programs in this series were formerly written up in the *It Works* series published by OE in 1969. These six continue to operate successfully, as evidenced by the evaluation data; and since the *It Works* booklets are out of print, the program descriptions have been updated and included in this *Model Programs* series.

Two other programs—Programed Tutorial Reading Project, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Summer Junior High Schools, New York, New York—identified as exemplary compensatory education programs were included in the former *Model Programs* series on reading. Since these program descriptions are still available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, they were not republished for this series.

Two previous *Model Programs* series have been issued—on reading (10 programs) and childhood education (33 programs). Booklets on these programs are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for 15 to 25 cents each.

Project Early Push
Buffalo, New York

Overview

Project Early Push is a preschool program for disadvantaged 4-year-olds which has been operating since 1966. The program is carefully designed to provide experiences which are basic to later reading success and which are usually missing in traditional preschool environments. Seventeen schools were involved in the program during the 1967–68 academic year. The program expanded to include 22 schools during the 1970–71 academic year. Evaluation data have shown consistent gains in IQ for project children.

Program Description

Objectives

The overall goal of Project Early Push has been defined as follows:

The program was designed to bridge the gap between the culturally different environment of the children and the requirements of the school experience they would encounter in the primary grade classroom (Buffalo Public Schools, 1967).

Note.—This is an update of the It Works series publication "Project Early Push, Buffalo, New York" published by the Office of Education in 1969.

Twelve specific objectives were identified as necessary components of this goal:

1. Nurturing a healthy self-concept.
2. Improving perceptual, discriminatory, labeling, and concept-building abilities.
3. Enlarging understanding of the environment.
4. Encouraging self-expression.
5. Developing body coordination.
6. Encouraging interaction with others.
7. Stimulating verbal communication.
8. Providing meaningful experiences with literature.
9. Developing auditory discrimination and appreciation.
10. Encouraging appreciation of a well-ordered environment.
11. Gaining the interest, support, and involvement of parents in the progress and welfare of their children.
12. Improving teacher as well as lay understanding of culturally deprived children.

Personnel

Project administrator.—One full-time project administrator provides instructional leadership and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of all phases of the program.

Assistant project administrator.—One full-time assistant project administrator has the primary responsibility for supervising the program teachers and teachers' aides.

Psychologist.—One full-time psychologist assumes overall responsibility for the mental health of the project pupils. He conducts inservice meetings for the staff on behavior-related topics, provides private counseling for children with behavior problems,

observes and assists individual teachers in promoting preventive mental-health care, conducts conferences with parents and carries out program evaluations.

Visiting teacher.—One full-time visiting teacher works between the home, community, and school to promote the social-emotional adjustment of the children. He informs families of the various community agencies and their functions, works with the psychologist in assisting children with behavior problems, and makes home visits to extend the mental-health program to the home.

Home-school coordinator.—A full-time home-school coordinator is responsible for stimulating parent participation in the program. He develops procedures designed to generate enthusiasm, supervises parent meetings and classroom visits, and edits the monthly parent newspaper.

Classroom teachers.—There are 25 classroom teachers, 12 full-time and 13 half-time. Each full-time teacher teaches two half-day classes of 15 pupils each.

Enrichment teacher-consultants.—Two half-time enrichment teachers, one in art and one in music, make regular visits to each classroom to demonstrate how art and music can be integrated with the instructional program.

Community aides.—There are 20 paid teacher aides, 17 full-time and 3 half-time. When selecting aides, preference is given to applicants with some education beyond high school or with previous experience as nurses' aides. The aides provide pupils with extra individual attention.

Clerical assistants.—Two full-time clerks handle all typing, recordkeeping, and other clerical activities related to the program.

In addition, various paid consultants and demonstration teachers assist in the bimonthly inservice meetings for teachers.

Methodology

The distinguishing characteristics of Project Early Push include: (1) small well-equipped classes arranged into several interest centers, (2) a relatively unstructured curriculum, (3) an extensive schedule of field trips, (4) intensive parental participation, and (5) regularly scheduled inservice training. Each Early Push class is composed of approximately 15 children who are taught by a qualified teacher and community aide. Classes are well equipped with furniture, housekeeping items, musical instruments, audiovisual materials, locomotor toys, woodworking equipment, and science materials. Instructional materials and equipment are arranged into interest centers which are periodically rearranged to correspond to current thematic units.

During the first and longest period of the day, children are free to select from the centers those materials and activities that interest them most. The teacher's role during the free activity period is to help the children capitalize on each potential learning experience. After this initial period which lasts up to 2 hours, children are provided with a snack prepared by the teacher and her aide with the assistance of the children. A short test period follows the snack; then the children participate in one or more group activities for the remainder of the class time. Group activities include discussions, rhythmic and musical activities, group games, and listening to stories. In addition to classroom activities, the children are taken on many field trips designed to broaden their experience and interest.

Parents are encouraged to make classroom visits and to participate in classroom activities. Two parent-teacher conferences and two parent-teacher workshops are scheduled each year. A volunteer parent council meets three times a year to discuss

new directions and make recommendations for program improvement. Monthly, the program publishes and distributes a parent newspaper. Teachers and their aides attend inservice meetings on an average of two meetings per month. They also attend teaching demonstrations and talks by authorities in early childhood education.

Specific Examples of Methodology

Among the innovative procedures in the project was the art program which was designed by the staff with the project psychologist's consultation to foster self-expression and contribute to the development of self-concept. Examples of the children's work which demonstrated the growth that had taken place during the program were exhibited at the city art gallery.

An issue of the Parent News might contain the following articles:

"We Welcome Your Visits"—an invitation to the parents to make classroom visits (printed in both English and Spanish).

"Art in the Home"—a parent's description of the ways in which common household items can be used as art materials.

"Visiting Teacher Service"—an explanation of the services provided by the visiting teacher.

"Our SOCA Trip"—a parent's description of a recent field trip.

"Our Busy Four-Year Olds"—a discussion of the learning characteristics of 4-year-olds taken from an article by the New York State Education Department.

"Improved Dental and Medical Services"—announcement of the dates and locations of health exams.

"Coming Events"—a listing of the dates of parents' meetings to be held at each school.

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The following instructional materials and equipment are supplied for each classroom.

Furniture

- Block cart
- Fold-away storage cabinet
- Kindergarten chairs and tables
- Locker units
- Metal table and two chairs
- Rockers
- Rockering rowboat
- Teacher's desk and chair
- Variplay triangle set
- Storage shelves
- Room divider and pegboard screen

Housekeeping

- Child-size doll bed
- Doll carriage
- Double-decker doll beds
- Dresser without mirror
- Hutch cupboards
- Ironing boards and iron
- Metal dressup mirror
- Refrigerator
- Sink
- Stove
- Metal wall mirror

Art

- Easel

Woodworking

- Kindergarten workbench
- Set of 15 tools
- Tool cabinet
- Workbench and vise

Science

- Animal cage
- Aquarium
- Terrarium

Climbing

- Crossing ladders
- Nesting bridges

Locomotor

- Ride 'Em Horse
- Steel platform truck
- Topper truck
- Tricycles
- Wagons

Music

- Autoharp
- Barrell drum
- Cluster bells
- Castanets
- Chinese skill tom-tom
- Cymbals
- Decorated Mexican gourd maracas
- Economy tone block and beaver
- Eight-note diatonic step bells
- Hand snare drum
- Jingle taps
- Korean temple bells
- Medium tom-tom
- Piano
- Rhythm sticks
- Sand blocks
- Single bell on handle
- Small tom-tom
- Tambourines
- Temple block floor stand
- Tenor drum with handle
- Triangle
- Twin bongo drum
- Wood blocks
- Wrist bells

Library

- Library display unit
- A paperback book library

Nutritional

- Electric refrigerator
- Hot plate

Audiovisual

- Tape recorder

Budget

The program was financed by funds from Elementary and Secondary Education Act title I grants. The total operating costs is about $350,000. Ninety percent is spent on salaries and the rest on teaching supplies and equipment. The per pupil cost is approximately $550. Each child is provided with a daily snack at a cost of about 15 cents per day.

Evaluation

A random sample of the children during the 1968-69 academic year showed a mean IQ gain of 5.7 points on the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence. That gain was found to be statistically significant. Full-scale score gains and most subscale gains on a shortened version of the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence were found to be satistically significant at the end of the 1969-70 school year. Similar, though somewhat larger, gains were reported each year on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test; however, since the teachers themselves did the testing, the evaluator suggested that interpretation of the results be made with caution.

On the basis of the above data, it appears that the Early Push project is a continued success. Each academic year since 1967-68 the children in the program have made intelligence test gains that, when tested, have been found to be statistically significant.

Sources for Further Information

Further information on Project Early Push may be obtained from:

Dr. Joseph Manch
Superintendent of Schools
712 City Hall
Buffalo, New York 14202
(716) 842-4646

Miss Joan C. Downey
Project Administrator of Special Program
in Early Childhood Education
420 City Hall
Buffalo, New York 14202

References

Buffalo Public Schools. Early Push, 1968-69. *In Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I Evaluation 1968-69.* Buffalo, N.Y.: Buffalo Public Schools, Division of Curriculum Evaluation and Development, 1969.

Petrozzi, C. R. *Project Early Push, 1969-70 Program Evaluation.* Buffalo, N.Y.: Board of Education, June, 1970.

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MODEL PROGRAMS—Compensatory Education Series

Fifteen promising compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged are included in this series. Following is a list of the programs and their locations:

College Bound Program, New York, N.Y.

Diagnostic Reading Clinic, Cleveland, Ohio

The Fernald School Remediation of Learning Disorders Program, Los Angeles, Calif.

Higher Horizons 100, Hartford, Conn.

The Juan Morel Campos Bilingual Center, Chicago, Ill.

Learning To Learn Program, Jacksonville, Fla.

More Effective Schools Program, New York, N.Y.

Mother-Child Home Program, Freeport, N.Y.

Preschool Program, Fresno, Calif.

Project Conquest, East St. Louis, Ill.

Project Early Push, Buffalo, N.Y.

Project MARS, Leominster, Mass.

Project R-3, San Jose, Calif.

PS 115 Alpha One Reading Program, New York, N.Y.

Remedial Reading Laboratories, El Paso, Texas

Two programs also identified for this series were described in the *Model Programs—Reading* series: Programed Tutorial Reading Project, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Summer Junior High Schools, New York, New York. Since these program descriptions are still current and available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, they were not rewritten for this series.